

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. Claims 1-15, 21-27, and 30-34 are now pending, of which claims 1, 11, 23, and 26 are independent. By this amendment, claims 8, 11, 21, 23, and 24 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kenreich; claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kenreich in view of Muhr; claims 3-4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kenreich and Muhr, and in further view of Kwok; and claim 5 stands under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kenreich, Muhr, and Kwok, and in further view of Gafner; and claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kenreich in view of Tanigawa. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejection are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

With regards to rejecting independent claim 1, the Examiner states that Kenreich discloses a mist generating device 128 that supplies mist into the drum.

Applicants respectfully submit that Kenreich does not disclose a mist generating device as claimed. In particular, claim 1 recites "a mist generating device **adapted to convert water to mist**, whereby the **water** is supplied as a **mist** into the drum." (Emphasis added). In contrast, Kenreich discloses an apparatus for bleaching fabrics that introduces bleaching material into a heated fabric-drying air for depositing the bleach on the fabric for absorption by the fabric. *See* col. 2, lines 5-11. Therefore, atomizing pump 128 is not adapted to covert **water** into **mist**. Instead, the atomizing pump 128 is used to introduce bleaching material into the air stream. *See* Fig. 3.

As noted in M.P.E.P. 2111.04, certain claim language raises the issue of whether the language is further limiting of the claim. One example is "adapted to" language. In the present invention, water is converted into mist, and the converted water is delivered into the drum. The claimed water is not bleaching material. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the

atomizing pump 128 of Kenreich cannot be the claimed mist generating device that is “adapted to convert water to mist.”

None of the other references relied on by the Examiner were cited to overcome the deficiency noted above with respect to Kenreich. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Kenreich, for the reasons explained above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

With regard to dependent claims 2-7, Applicants submit that claims 2-7 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, which is allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore claims 2-7 are also allowable based on their dependence from claim 1, as well as for their additionally recited subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 26, 27, and 30-34 are allowed, and that claims 8-15 and 21-25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. Objected-to claims 11 and 23 have been rewritten into independent form, and should therefore be allowed. Also, claims 8-10, 12-15, 21, 22, 24, and 25 depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of independent claims 11 and 23, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 11 or 23, which are believed to be allowable.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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